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What is claimed is

1. A network for communicating with a plurality of radiotelephones via respective communication channels over timeslots on a carrier, wherein the channels can operate at a first or second data rate such that a timeslot on the carrier can transmit a single communication channel operating at the first data rate or two communication channels operating at the second data rate, the network comprising a controller responsive to a predetermined condition for initiating a change in the data rate of a transmitted channel from the first data rate to the second data rate.
2. A network according to claim 1 wherein the controller is responsive to the predetermined condition for initiating a change in the data rate of two channels transmitted on separate timeslots from the first data rate to the second data rate and combining the two channels onto the same timeslot.
3. A network according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the first data rate is a full speech rate and the second data rate is a half speech rate.
4. A network according to any preceding claim, wherein the predetermined condition is that the number of channels established in the network exceeds a predetermined threshold.
5. A network according to any preceding claim, wherein the predetermined condition is the initiation of a channel with a second network.
6. A network according to any preceding claim, wherein the two channels originate in the network.
7. A network substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings, and/or as shown therein.

8. A controller for operation in a network wherein the network communicates with a plurality of radiotelephones via respective communication channels over timeslots on a carrier, the channels being operable at a first or second data rate such that a timeslot on the carrier can transmit a single communication channel operating at the first data rate or two communication channels operating at the second data rate, the controller comprising means responsive to a predetermined condition for initiating a change in the data rate of a transmitted channel from the first data rate to the second data rate.
9. A radiotelephone for operation with a network which initiates a change in data rate of a channel from a first data rate to a second data rate, the radiotelephone comprising a controller responsive to a signal from the network for changing the data rate of data being transmitted on a channel from the radiotelephone.
10. A method of communicating with a plurality of radiotelephones via respective communication channels over timeslots on a carrier, wherein the channels can operate at a first or second data rate such that a timeslot on the carrier can transmit a single communication channel operating at the first data rate or two communication channels operating at the second data rate, the method comprising changing the data rate of a transmitted channel from the first data rate to the second data rate in response to a predetermined condition.
11. A method according to claim 9, further comprising in response to the predetermined condition initiating a change in the data rate of two channels transmitted on separate timeslots from the first data rate to the second data rate and combining the two channels onto the same timeslot.

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[illegible]